

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, it appears that the Bush administration refuses to learn anything from 9/11 or Hurricane Katrina. Once again this year, President Bush's budget shortchanges America's security, failing to make it the number one priority. Here are some startling examples of how the President refuses to make Americans as safe as they should be:

First, the budget underfunds key programs that provide local communities with the resources to protect our borders, our ports, mass transit, and critical infrastructure. Second, the budget continues the trend of cutting grants for our first responders, cutting overall funding for three key first responder grant programs by 35 percent below 2 years ago. Third, the budget zeros out funding for interoperability grants, grants that would allow Federal, State, and local governments the ability to communicate during a major disaster or terrorist attack.

President Bush claims he is protecting the homeland, but he refuses to back it up with the funding necessary to prepare agencies at all levels for the worst case scenarios. Hasn't he learned anything from Katrina?

Pull FEMA out from under Homeland Security.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KOLBE). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

RECORD votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

#### SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 79) expressing the sense of Congress that no United States assistance should be provided directly to the Palestinian Authority if any representative political party holding a majority of parliamentary seats within the Palestinian Authority maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. CON. RES. 79

*Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that no United States assistance should be provided directly to the Palestinian Authority if any representative political party holding a majority of parliamentary seats within the Palestinian Authority maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in support of S. Con. Res. 79.

This resolution was sponsored in the other body by our former colleague Senator THUNE of South Dakota and was cosponsored by Senators BROWNBACK, CHAMBLISS, JOHNSON, LIEBERMAN, TALENT and VOINOVICH. It passed the Senate by unanimous consent on February 1, 2006.

On January 25, 2006, Palestinians turned out in large numbers from all walks of life to forge a new government that can respond to their various needs. The Palestinian people voted for change and improvement in their livelihoods. They were largely frustrated by the growing occupation in the West Bank, the inability of the Fatah-backed Palestinian Liberation Organization to deliver on the expectations of the peace process, and internal strife and rampant corruption. The Palestinian citizens used the power of democracy to send a loud and a clear message to their leadership.

Speaking in a press conference shortly after the elections, President Bush noted the power of democracy, saying, "When you give people the vote, you give people the chance to express themselves at the polls, and if you're unhappy with the status quo, they will let you know. Obviously, the people were not happy with the status quo. The people are demanding honest government. The people want services."

The Bush administration's pursuit of freedom and democracy in the Arab world has strengthened the weight and role of "people power" in the region's political development. Representative democracy may result in the coming to power of groups in the Middle East or, for that matter, in Spain, that are critical of the United States or our policies in the Middle East. Certainly the recent Palestinian parliamentary elections pose a unique challenge. Over 50 percent of the seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council will be filled from a list chosen by an armed group that believes in the destruction of Israel, a United Nations member state, and is recognized as a terrorist organization by the international community.

This result demonstrates the serious contradiction we see in Palestinian territories between the ideal of a democratic government characterized by the rule of law and the reality of a political process in which armed rejectionist groups participate. Should the United States at this point abandon all means

to remain constructively engaged with the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority under President Mahmoud Abbas? Tying the hands of the administration is not in the interest of United States national security. We need to react with some care. Hurting the Palestinian people will reward terrorist regimes like Syria and Iran which seek to exploit the suffering of the Palestinians for their own selfish reasons.

S. Con. Res. 79 is direct and to the point. It sends a strong message about the expectations of the United States and the international community toward Hamas when it comes to Hamas' attitude toward Israel. We declare that the United States will not provide direct assistance to a government that believes in the destruction of Israel.

The election of the Change and Reform Party, Hamas' alter ego, has raised questions about other forms of assistance to a future Palestinian government. The Quartet, in which the United States is a core member, concluded that "it was inevitable that future assistance to any new government would be reviewed by donors against that government's commitment to the principles of nonviolence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap."

Many might be surprised to know that the United States does not provide ongoing, direct financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority. The majority of funds are channeled through the United States Agency for International Development to nongovernmental organizations under a strict vetting process. The United States has provided direct assistance only four times, three of which have been under this administration, with the funds being closely regulated and monitored.

United States and other assistance to the Palestinian people is vital to meeting basic needs and avoiding a humanitarian disaster. According to the World Bank, unemployment in the West Bank and Gaza is 23 percent. Forty-three percent of the population is living below the poverty line. United States assistance to nonprofit organizations is also critical to achieving our objective of a two-state solution. Closing the door on moderates in Palestinian civil society will contribute to the growth of warlordism and chaos.

□ 1030

The United States has a vital national security interest in a Middle East in which two states, Israel and Palestine, will live side by side in peace and security, based on the terms of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. A viable, contiguous, and prosperous Palestinian state is necessary to achieve the security that Israel longs for.

I believe the administration is responding appropriately to the situation